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CONTENTS

EDITORIAL: CONSTRUCTION AND CONTROVERSY.

EXPERIENCE, NATURE AND ART 4
By John Dewey

CÉZANNE 11
By Albert C. Barnes

ART AS CREATIVE 20
By Laurence Buermeyer

AN EXPERIENCE IN STUDYING PAINTINGS 28
By Mary Mullen

FRANZ CIZEK AND THE FREE EXPRESSION METHOD . 36
By Thomas Munro

ART TEACHING THAT OBSTRUCTS EDUCATION . . . 41
By Albert C. Barnes

ILLUSTRATIONS: Paintings by Chardin, Corot, Cézanne

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JOURNAL *of*

THE BARNES FOUNDATION

VOL. 1 *OCTOBER, 1925* NO. 3

EDITORIAL.

Construction and Controversy.

THERE is a view generally prevalent according to which construction and controversy are alternatives, between which on any occasion we are compelled to choose. It is true that what is called "constructive" criticism is usually admitted as allowable, but by this is meant comment on matters of detail, a recommendation of patching and tinkering that leaves essentials untouched. Anything that goes beyond this to advocate drastic alteration, and of course extirpation, of the thing criticized, is condemned as "destructive" and explained as a love of ruin or chaos for its own sake. This seems to us a profoundly mistaken view, and one especially calling for examination in this Journal. Indeed, we believe that the Barnes Foundation's policy of branding as radically false and pernicious what seems to it such, offers the most hopeful method of eliminating the irrational and antiquated practices so strongly entrenched in influential art and educational circles.

An attempt to bring into existence something essentially new invariably finds the ground on which it must build already occupied. Neither ideas nor material things can grow in a vacuum; from the start they must compete for their right to existence with the ideas or things already in control of the field. Sometimes, but not always, they can be grafted on the old, and when they can a policy of intransigeance is undesirable; when they cannot the only course is a simple struggle for existence. And since everything fights for its life, such a struggle cannot always be kept within the rules of decorum which regulates friendly association between individuals; but to consider decorum as the first necessity of debate is often to surrender a cause.

This is especially true when existing institutions are firmly established and surrounded by prestige which prevents any

impartial examination of their right to exist. The attempt to call in question their validity is then treated as a piece of presumption, or else simply ignored. We all know that deeply-rooted habits do not yield to any merely abstract reasoning. Such reasoning is simply listened to at one moment and forgotten the next; nothing short of a severe shock can secure genuine attention to the matter at issue. An individual, for example, addicted to the excessive use of alcohol, will rarely or never give any real thought to what he is doing until the consequences of it are forcibly impressed upon him by such unmistakable danger-signals as loss of health or employment. Social institutions which owe their fixity largely to habit are in no different case. So long as the success of their workings is not challenged in a manner striking enough to arrest attention, the voice of mere reason beats upon deaf ears.

To attack in terms wholly free from ambiguity may thus be the necessary prelude to any fruitful discussion. Such attacks are frequently said to be "in bad taste." They are in bad taste if they spring from malice, desire for personal aggrandizement or any other motive than desire for the general good. If, however, all discussion that seeks to go to the roots of the matter, which does not assume the essential rightness of what is questioned, is in bad taste, then "good taste" is nothing but a weapon by which vested interests may fight any penetrating analysis of their prestige and privileges.

It is sometimes said that while criticism of institutions is permissible, criticism of persons is objectionable and offensive. Defenders of established institutions, when they invoke this principle, clearly intend its benefits to be confined to themselves: the "subversive" critic must expect "personalities," and usually, indeed, vilification.* The principle, however, is in general as paralyzing as anything could be to all serious attempt at betterment of existing conditions. All institutions are directed and utilized by persons, and if they are noxious the fact is apparent in the effect they have on individuals, includ-

* Nothing is more illuminating, to the student of herd-psychology, than the controversial manners of the professional conservative. Bernard Shaw lists, in his *Quintessence of Ibsenism*, some of the expressions applied to Ibsen, his work, and his admirers by London dramatic critics in 1891. Among them are: "A gloomy sort of ghoul, bent on groping for horrors in the night," "Morbid, unhealthy, unwholesome and disgusting," "Absolutely loathsome and fetid," "Garbage and offal," "Muck-ferreting dogs." The list might be prolonged indefinitely; it might be paralleled by the epithets applied to Manet and Monet by the French academicians of their day, or, in a different field, by those to which the Abolitionists fell heir in our own country.

ing the individuals who profit by their operation. This is the ground for the legal maxim, that all guilt is personal. Its practical justification is shown by the ineffectiveness of all law-enforcement, so long as no individual can be made responsible for anti-social acts. It is true that individuals are very largely what institutions make them, and that consequently it is unjust to single out an individual for peculiar condemnation when anyone else, faithfully serving the same system, would have done the same thing in his place. This, however, does not alter the principle that he who holds a position must accept responsibility for whatever the position involves. Criticism is thus illegitimate only if it charges the individual with personal offenses over and above those entailed by his place in the system.

Criticism, however "destructive" in appearance, is always legitimate if it offers an alternative to what is criticized, and if it is free from animus. Whoever considers something wholly bad cannot without compromise of his convictions urge less than its total abolition. If that involves saying also that the activities of some individual have, in this respect, no justification for existence, the fact may be unpleasant, but the obligation is no less binding. In the long run, it is not even kindness to the individual to do anything else. The piercing of hollow pretensions is a humanitarian as well as an intellectual duty.

What prevents recognition of the fact is the current belief that no one should be subjected to searching criticism if his intentions are good. No more deplorable superstition could be found. The harm done by ill-intentioned persons is utterly trivial when compared with that done by those whose consciences approve their every act. No one doubts that crime and malice are deplorable and that they ought to be wiped out, but who cares to read a denunciation of criminals? The only anti-social acts which are significant enough to be worth discussing are those of men who are "doing their best," but whose best springs from demonstrably untenable convictions. The militarist, the religious persecutor, the defender of unintelligent subservience to mere custom and authority—these, who are not considered criminals at all, are the real enemies of humanity. Their guilt is shared by all who in the presence of unmistakable evils, take refuge in inertia or invoke prestige to stifle discussion. To refrain from bringing to light the harm done by well-intentioned persons is to resign one's self to futility.

It is in accordance with these principles that the polemics of the Barnes Foundation will be carried on. We shall have no hesitation in calling in question the grounds for anyone's pres-

tige, his exercise of functions for which he is unqualified, or, in general, the value of activities which there is good reason for believing to be pernicious. Such criticism is not necessarily intended to convey any charge of personal corruption or wrongdoing, as these terms are generally understood. We have no interest in individuals except as their influence is a force in education, especially in education in art. When it is such a force, those who exert it should not and cannot expect immunity from a candid appraisement of their activities.

Experience, Nature and Art.*

By John Dewey.

Contemporary theories of art generally suffer from inconsistency. They are only in part interpretations of art and of experience as these are to be observed today; in part, they represent a survival of opinions and assumptions inherited from the Greeks. According to Greek theory, art is a form of practice, and so incurs the reproach of being concerned with a merely subjective, changing and imperfect world. This was true of all arts, of those now classified as "fine" as well as of the useful crafts practised by the artisan. In contrast with both, science was regarded as a revelation—in fact, the only true revelation—of reality. It was thought to be through science alone that access is provided to the world as it is in itself, not colored or distorted by human wants or preferences. Art corresponded to production, science to "contemplation," and the productive was branded as inferior, an activity proper only to mechanics and slaves.

This view was a reflection in theory of the Greek social system, in which a menial class performed all necessary labor, and freemen and citizens alone enjoyed the fruits of that labor. Since the leisure class held the position of power and honor, its part in life was regarded as intrinsically superior, and the artist, who by the labor of his hands shaped the objects which were the food of contemplation, belonged to the lower realm of nature and experience.

Contemporary opinion accepts, in the main, the Greek view that knowledge is contemplation, and that it alone reveals

* Abstract from Professor Dewey's new book *Experience and Nature*, Open Court Publishing Company, Chicago. Price, $3.00.

nature as nature is. The Greek disparagement of art it partly accepts and partly rejects; accepts it as regards the useful arts, which are clearly modes of practice, but rejects it as regards the fine arts. In fine art it makes a distinction between the experience of the artist, which is considered to be creative, and the experience of the beholder or connoisseur, which is regarded as passive. Of these, it ranks the artist above the connoisseur, the producer above the consumer. At the same time, although it regards knowledge as contemplation, it recognizes that science, the systematic pursuit of knowledge, is active, an affair of making experiments, and so belongs to the realm of practice.

These notions are consistent neither with each other nor, as a whole, with experience. The Greek view was sound in recognizing the continuity of "useful" with "fine" art; it erred in neglecting the connection of knowledge with experiment, and so in isolating knowledge from practice. If knowledge is truly contemplation, and is on that account superior to mere practice, then all arts, that of the painter no less than that of the carpenter, are inferior to science, and the painter stands in rank below the dilettante who looks at paintings. If, however, not knowledge but art is the final flowering of experience, the crown and consummation of nature, and knowledge is only the means by which art, which includes all practice, is enabled to attain its richest development, then it is the artist who represents nature and life at their best.

Current discussion of aesthetics and art falls into inconsistency about the active and passive roles of art largely because it confuses art as a process of execution, of creation of a type of material things, and art as the enjoyable appreciation of things so created. To avoid this inconsistency it is advantageous to use the word "artistic" to designate the activities by which works of art are brought into being, and to reserve the term "aesthetic" for the appreciation of them when created, the enhanced or heightened perceptions in which they result.

Although the view here defended asserts that there is no ultimate difference between the artist and the artisan, there is an obvious empirical difference between the activities and experience of the artist, as we actually find him, and those of the artisan. That the artist's life is the more humanly desirable, that it is the richer, more self-rewarding, more humane, none would deny. The difference, however, is not one between aesthetic contemplation and mere labor, but between those activities which are charged with intrinsic significance—which are both instrumental, means to more remote ends, and con-

summatory, immediately enjoyable—and those forms which are *merely* instrumental, are in themselves nothing but drudgery. This fact is due to nothing in the nature of experience or practice, but only to defects in the present economic and social order. To call the greater part of the productive activities now carried on "useful arts" is mere euphemism, by which the essential irrationality of the existing regime is concealed. Innumerable commodities which are manufactured by the "useful arts" are only apparently and superficially useful; their employment results not in satisfaction of intelligent desire, but in confusion and extravagance, bought at the price of a narrowed and embittered experience. There can be no true understanding of either practice or aesthetic appreciation while practice is in large measure slavery, and while "aesthetic appreciation" is merely one of the forms of distraction by which intervals of respite from slavery are whiled away.

The degradation of labor is paralleled by a degradation of art. Most of what passes for art at present falls under three captions:

First, there is mere indulgence in emotional outpouring, without reference to the conditions of intelligibility. Such "expression of emotion" is largely futile—futile partly because of its arbitrary and wilfully eccentric character, but partly also because the channels of expression currently accepted as permissible are so rigidly laid down that novelty can find acceptance only with the aid of violence.

In addition to this type—and frequently mingled with it—there is experimentation in new modes of craftsmanship, cases where the seemingly bizarre and over-individualistic character of the products is due to discontent with existing technique, and is associated with an attempt to find new modes of expression. It is aside from the point to treat these manifestations as if they constituted art for the first time in human history, or to condemn them as not art because of their violent departure from received canons and methods. Some movement in this direction has always been a condition of growth of new forms, a condition of salvation from that mortal arrest and decay called academic art.

Then there is that which in quantity bulks most largely as fine art: the production of buildings in the name of the art of architecture; of pictures in the name of painting; of novels, dramas, etc., in the name of literary art; a production which in reality is largely a form of commercialized industry in production of a class of commodities that find their sale among well-to-do persons desirous of maintaining a conventionally approved

status. As the first two modes carry to disproportionate excess that factor of difference, particularity and contingency which is indispensable in all art, deliberately flaunting avoidance of the repetitions and order of nature, so this mode celebrates the regular and finished. It is reminiscent rather than commemorative of the meanings of things. Its products remind their owner of things pleasant in memory though hard in direct-undergoing, and remind others that their owner has achieved an economic standard which makes possible cultivation and decoration of leisure.

Obviously no one of these classes of activity and products, or all of them put together, mark off anything that can be called distinctively fine art. They share their qualities and defects with many other activities and objects. But, fortunately, there may be mixed with any of them, and, still more fortunately, there may occur without mixture, process and product which are characteristically excellent. *This occurs when activity is productive of an object which affords continuously renewed delight.* This condition requires that the object be, with its successive consequences, indefinitely instrumental to *new* satisfying events. For otherwise the object is quickly exhausted and satiety sets in. Anyone who reflects upon the commonplace that a measure of artistic products is their capacity to attract and retain observation with satisfaction under whatever conditions they are approached, has a sure demonstration that a genuinely aesthetic object is not exclusively consummatory, but is causally productive as well. A consummatory object that is not also instrumental turns in time to the dust and ashes of boredom. The "eternal" quality of great art is its renewed instrumentality for further consummatory experiences.

When this fact is noted it is also seen that limitation of fineness of art to paintings, statues, poems, songs and symphonies is conventional, or even verbal. Any activity that is productive of objects whose perception is an immediate good, and whose operation is a continual source of enjoyable perception of other events exhibits fineness of art. There are acts of all kinds that directly refresh and enlarge the spirit and that are instrumental to the production of new objects and dispositions which are in turn productive of further refinements and replenishments. Frequently moralists make the acts *they* find excellent or virtuous wholly final, and treat art and affection as mere means. Aestheticians reverse the performance, and see in good *acts* means to an ulterior external happiness, while aesthetic appreciation is called a good in itself, or that strange

thing, an end in itself. But on both sides it is true that in being predominantly fructifying the things designated means are immediately satisfying. They are their own excuses for being just because they are charged with an office in quickening apprehension, enlarging the horizon of vision, refining discrimination, creating standards of appreciation which are confirmed and deepened by further experiences. It would almost seem that when their non-instrumental character is insisted on what is meant were an indefinitely expansive and radiating instrumental efficacy.

It is the fact that art, so far as it is truly art, is a union of the serviceable and the immediately enjoyable, of the instrumental and the consummatory, that makes it impossible to institute a difference in kind between useful and fine art. Many things are termed useful for reasons of social status, implying deprecation and contempt. Things are sometimes said to belong to the menial arts merely because they are cheap and used familiarly by common people. These things of daily use for ordinary ends may survive in later periods, or be transported to another culture, as from Japan and China to America, and being rare and sought by connoisseurs, rank forthwith as works of fine art. Other things may be called fine because their manner of use is decorative or socially ostentatious. It is tempting to make a distinction of degree and say that a thing belongs to the sphere of use when perception of its meaning is instrumental to something else; and that a thing belongs to fine art when its other uses are subordinate to its use in perception. The distinction has a rough practical value, but cannot be pressed too far. For in production of a painting or poem, as well as in making a vase or temple, a perception is also employed as a means for something beyond itself. Moreover, the perception of urns, pots and pans as commodities may be intrinsically enjoyable, although these things are primarily perceived with reference to some use to which they are put. The only *basic* distinction is that between bad art and good art, and this distinction between things that meet the requirements of art and those that do not applies equally to things of use and of beauty. Capacity to offer to perception meaning in which fruition and efficacy interpenetrate is met by different products in various degrees of fulness; it may be missed altogether by pans and poems alike. The difference between the ugliness of a meretriciously conceived and executed utensil and a meretricious and pretentious painting is one only of content or material; in form both are articles, and bad articles.

The relation of the aesthetic and the artistic, as above defined, may now be stated more precisely. Both are incidental to practice, to performance, but in the aesthetic the attained vision with which the artist presents us releases energies which remain diffuse and inchoate, which raise the whole level of our existence, but do not find issue in any single or specific form. In the artistic the existing consummation is utilized to bring into existence further analogous perceptions. A painter, for example, uses a picture not only to guide his perception of the world, but as a source of suggestions for painting additional pictures. Art in being, the active productive process, may thus be defined as an aesthetic perception, together with an *operative* perception of the efficiencies of the aesthetic object. A parallel contrast is to be found in scientific experience. The layman may by his knowledge of science understand the world about him much more clearly, and regulate his actions more effectively, than he could without it, but he is not called a scientist until he is able to utilize his knowledge to make fresh scientific discoveries. As to the scientist knowledge is a means to more knowledge, so to the artist aesthetic insight is a means to further aesthetic insight, and not merely to enhancement of life in general. The distinction between the aesthetic and the artistic, important as it is, is thus, in the last analysis, a matter of degree.

The meaning of the view accepted here may be made clearer if it is contrasted with the theory of art prevalent today in one school of critics, that aesthetic qualities in works of fine art are unique, separate not only from everything that is existential in nature but from all other forms of good. In proclaiming that such arts as music, poetry, painting have characteristics unshared by any natural things whatever, such critics carry to its conclusion the isolation of fine art from the useful, of the final from the efficacious.

As an example, we may consider that theory of art which makes the distinguishing quality of the aesthetic object its possession of what is called "significant form." Unless the meaning of the term is so isolated as to be wholly occult, it denotes a selection, for the sake of emphasis, purity, subtlety, of those forms which give consummatory significance to everyday subject-matters of experience. "Forms" are not the peculiar property or creation of the aesthetic and artistic; they are characters in virtue of which anything meets the requirements of an enjoyable perception. "Art" does not create the forms; it is their selection and organization in such ways as to enhance, prolong and purify the perceptual experience. It is

not by accident that some objects and situations afford marked perceptual satisfactions; they do so because of their structural properties and relations. An artist may work with a minimum of analytic recognition of these structures or "forms;" he may select them chiefly by a kind of sympathetic vibration. But they may also be discriminatively ascertained; and an artist may utilize his deliberate awareness of them to create works of art that are more formal and abstract than those to which the public is accustomed. Tendency to composition in terms of the formal characters marks much contemporary art, in poetry, painting, music, even sculpture and architecture. At their worst, these products are "scientific" rather than artistic; technical exercises, and of a new kind of pedantry. At their best, they assist in ushering in new modes of art and by education of the organs of perception in new modes of consummatory objects, they enlarge and enrich the world of human vision. But they do this, not by discarding altogether connection with the real world, but by a highly funded and generalized representation of the formal sources of ordinary emotional experience.

Thus we reach a conclusion regarding the relations of instrumental and fine art which is precisely the opposite of that intended by selective aestheticians; namely, that fine art consciously undertaken as such is peculiarly instrumental in quality. It is a device in experimentation carried on for the sake of education. It exists for a specialized use, use being a new training of modes of perception. The creators of such works of art are entitled, when successful, to the gratitude that we give to inventors of microscopes and microphones; in the end, they open new objects to be observed and enjoyed. This is a genuine service; but only an age of combined confusion and conceit will arrogate to works that perform this special utility the exclusive name of fine art.

Art is great in proportion as it is universal, that is, in proportion as the uniformities of nature which it reveals and utilizes are extensive and profound—provided, however, that they are freshly applied in concrete objects or situations. The only objects, insights, perceptions which remain perennially unwithered and unstaled are those which sharpen our vision for new and unforseen embodiments of the truth they convey. The "magic" of poetry—and pregnant experience has poetic quality—is precisely the revelation of meaning in the old effected by its presentation of the new. It radiates the light that never was on sea or land but that is henceforth an abiding illumination of objects.

Cézanne.*

By Albert C. Barnes.

Cézanne began working at the time when impressionism was at its height, and the influences upon him were in large measure the same as the influences upon Renoir. Both men were impressionists in their technique and remained impressionists throughout their careers, even though each used the method in distinctive and individual ways. Renoir and Cézanne were each deeply influenced by both Delacroix and Courbet. The first, but only fleeting, influence of Delacroix is seen in the romantic, dramatic subject-matter in Cézanne's earliest paintings. The profound lesson which he learned from Delacroix, and which lasted all his life, was the great effects obtainable from the structural and organic use of color. From Courbet he absorbed the simplifications and vigorous painting of naturalistic objects, which, combined with the later influences of Michel Angelo, El Greco and Pissarro, determined the form taken by his whole-hearted devotion to the construction of abstract design.

The early influence of Pissarro upon him was so strong that the first impressionist paintings by Cézanne could almost pass for Pissarros of extraordinary vigor. He took over his entire technique—quality and kind of color, its use in juxtaposed spots varied with broad areas of color, and his manner of using light. His grasp of fundamentals, and his ability to form original and powerful designs, seem to have been innate, for they appear in his earliest work, long before he had developed his final and characteristic form. Consequently, his use of Pissarro's method resulted in paintings that were stronger than Pissarro's own, more solid, better organized by means of color. His better sense of line, color, mass and space in their purely plastic function makes a form stronger than that of any of his contemporary impressionists.

Cézanne's evolution into his own distinctive technique was a slow process because he was deficient in natural facility in the use of the brush. From the first he was clearly an independent artist, but it was a long time before he could paint with the

* Reprinted from Dr. Barnes's new book *The Art in Painting*, Barnes Foundation Press, Price, $6.00.

assurance of Renoir, and his early work lacks the finish and mastery of medium which is to be seen in Renoir from the start. The sense of effort and strain remains even in his mature style, which never attains to Renoir's unconscious ease and naturalness. Although Renoir's painting also represents a gradual progress toward his final form, his early pictures are much more complete in themselves than Cézanne's and do not so clearly represent experimental and tentative stages.

During the course of Cézanne's experimentation the impressionistic technique is always much in evidence. The interest in color, the use of light to vivify the color in selected spots and also as a general illumination, are unmistakably in the impressionistic manner. But even before he had attained a degree of skill in the use of paint equal to Pissarro's, there is a noticeable advance in the dynamic power of the color in the design, and in its use to produce more convincing effects of three-dimensional reality.

The progress of Cézanne towards his fully characteristic later manner is treated in detail in the analyses in the Appendix of *The Art in Painting*. His progress towards the use of a thinner impasto resulted in an increasing ability to render the effects of solidity in terms free from the sculptural tendency of his earlier thick paint. This thinner paint transformed the roughness of effect in his early work to a lightness and delicacy that involves no loss of strength. As his style becomes more characteristically his own, the ability to compose in terms of deep space increases, with great heightening of conviction and moving power. At the same time, there is a softening of contours. His line rarely becomes blurred as in Renoir, but it loses its earlier tendency to hardness and comparative isolation from the other elements, and comes to be realized more intimately in union with light and color, especially color. His composition departs from conventionality and flows rhythmically throughout the whole of the canvas. The shapes of the objects become less naturalistic and more arbitrarily subordinated to the requirements of design. This tendency to distortion of shape has always been the quality in Cézanne which aroused the scornful wonder of the inexperienced observer, and is chiefly responsible for the effort which is required to appreciate his painting at all. He has none of the charm which Renoir has for the superficial observer. Such an observer does not, of course, see the essential plastic virtues of Renoir, but he does see an immediately pleasing lyric quality, while in Cézanne he is likely to see nothing familiar. Cézanne, in other words, is a connoisseur's painter.

Cézanne can be appreciated only after all considerations of naturalistic accuracy have been dismissed. His distinctive achievement was to establish a series of relationships in deep space between solid three-dimensional objects, so that their ensemble is a unified plastic design of great aesthetic power. This feeling for the dynamic relationships between objects and the ability to coördinate the resulting forms into a design involved a specific genius, which in the period of his maturity resulted in designs as original and as moving as those of Giotto. To achieve these designs he violated all conceptions of probability or possibility. Objects appear suspended in the air, in complete defiance of the law of gravitation, figures and faces are distorted into monstrosities. Both color and outline are treated as motives to be worked with as design requires, and in no sense as requirements laid down by the actual appearance of things in the real world. These distortions are to be found not only in the faces and other parts of the human body, but also in all the plastic means, including line, mass, space: they are fundamental to the planes themselves. These planes are changed from the normal in every conceivable way, and the new forms are built up by the interpenetration of these distorted planes. In all of his work there is a perceptible, a definite idea, which he himself called the *motif*. Naturalistic considerations in the representation of subject-matter were sacrificed to the desire to make lines, perspective and space so fuse in planes of color that all the elements come into equilibrium. In other words, objects, deprived of their resemblance to real things, were merely the means used to integrate the plastic elements into new and distinctive forms.

The essential material for all his forms was color, and he built everything up out of color. His modelling is done by means of modulation of color and not by the usual method of variations of the same color to indicate the gradations of light by which in nature the curving surface of a solid body is shown. Cézanne used strokes of color, which give the essential effect of solidity, but in a form far removed from that of nature. The result is a richer plastic effect, with no loss of conviction. In modelling he also used light in the usual way as an additional means; but modulation with color is the essential characteristic, is distinctively his own method, and it shows the thoroughness with which he carried out his intention to utilize the prime material of painting, color, to the greatest possible extent. His manner of using color represents an originality and an economy of means comparable to Rembrandt's, and is perhaps even better

Cézanne **Barnes Foundation**

Reprinted from *The Art in Painting*, by Albert C. Barnes.

Corot Barnes Foundation

than Rembrandt's, because color is in itself richer than chiaroscuro, it has more possibilities, and is more distinctively *the* material in the medium of painting. In the achievement of subtle effects by means of color he rivals Velasquez, though he was by far the lesser craftsman. He raises the functional quality of color to its supreme degree, and thus carries the Venetian tradition to its consummation. Perspective, drawing, composition and the creation of solid structure are all done chiefly by color. Even in his distortions the line is either color itself or is so merged with color in a moving formal relation to adjacent colors as to make the drawing more powerful. The distorted planes in his best work consist of an equilibrium of colors fused into new forms which are Cézanne's very own. In these, color enters into fluid, rhythmic relations with all the other plastic elements, and organizes the painting by means of distinctive forms. This rhythmic interplay of color-forms is Cézanne's great achievement, and was never realized better by any other artist. Color animates everything, without any recourse to the moving power of illustration.

Cézanne's forms are essentially abstract, but they are achieved through the medium of subject-matter that has sufficient point of contact with the real world to establish relation with our funded experience of real things. For example, the hands in the "Portrait of Madame Cézanne" (page 14) are obviously distorted and unnatural, but they recall human hands, in their essential and abstract quality, with a forceful, moving reality greater than any photographic imitation of hands could produce. In this power to give the feeling of the real while avoiding all literal realism, Cézanne vies with Rembrandt and Velasquez, in whose paintings there is the same realism without photography. More than either of those painters, Cézanne stripped away everything not absolutely essential, and through new technical means succeeded in giving that sense of profound fidelity to the deeper aspects of things, which is the characteristic of all great art.

Cézanne ranks with the greatest painters of all ages because, by the use of means purely plastic and by a new use of the most difficult of those means—color, he realized a form of the highest conviction and power. In his elimination of everything not entirely necessary to design, he followed in the footsteps of Michel Angelo, Tintoretto and El Greco, whose distortions he applied to new purposes. From Velasquez, through the intermediation of Manet, he learned to simplify. But in him the whole tradition of simplification and distortion was merged

with the impressionistic technique and became something radically new in the history of painting. His power is equal to Michel Angelo's, and is more effective because it is achieved by means entirely intrinsic to painting, instead of the suggestions derived from sculpture to be found even in the best of Michel Angelo's work. His landscapes have the majesty of Claude's, combined with a more austere, rugged force; they have an added purity because he dispenses with anything of even the degree of obviousness of Claude's atmosphere. His perception of the significant enables him to put into a simple still-life a monumental quality that makes Raphael's "Transfiguration" seem trivial.

Cézanne's shortcomings arise partly from the same source as his greatness and partly from his never wholly perfect command of his medium. As a painter he never rises to the greatest heights, those of Velasquez, Rembrandt or Renoir. Cézanne's laborious efforts to force and coax paint to express his ideas and feelings are perceptible at all stages of his work. Even in his most mature paintings he sometimes lacked that command over paint which makes it seem that an artist can execute without apparent effort, which is the mark of the supreme craftsman. Another disadvantage is that his resolute adherence to essentials left him comparatively little interest in the sensuous charm that accompanies a specific decorative quality. In this respect he is inferior to all the greater Venetians, to Velasquez, to Renoir and even to Rubens. This does not mean that his surfaces are at all bleak or barren, but there is not the wealth of decorative quality throughout every area of his pictures that there is, for example, in Giorgione's. In Renoir there is a similar, powerful plastic form made up of solid masses rhythmically arranged in deep space, but in addition we have a greater variety and richness of color-chords and a more ingratiating charm, such as exists in Giorgione and Titian. The example of these artists also shows that it is possible to have strength of plastic form in combination with a greater variety of human values than Cézanne presents to us, so that his purification of plastic form is not attained without loss. This defect is offset to a certain extent by the sensuous richness of the plastic forms themselves, in which the color is deeply integrated.

He was the equal of the greatest artists in making his forms embody the abstract feelings, the human values, that the objects and events of every-day life communicate. He rendered the essential qualities of those feelings stripped of the irrelevant and accidental, and endowed them with the pervasive mystery, power and charm that makes them moving, vital and beautiful.

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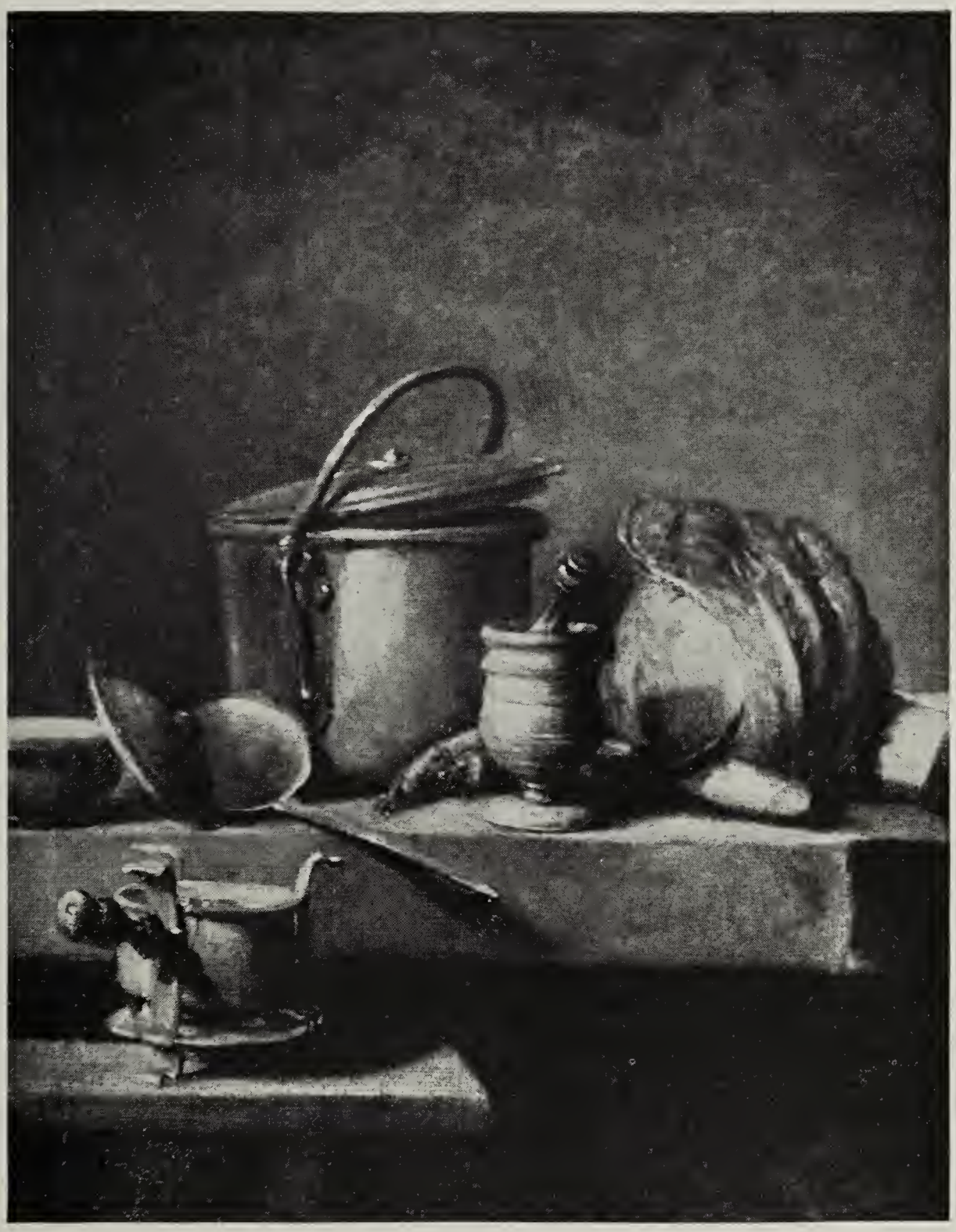
(Reprinted from *An Approach to Art*, by Mary Mullen.)



Chardin **Barnes Foundation**

Art as Creative.*

By Laurence Buermeyer.

We have urged and illustrated the point that aesthetic experience in all its forms is an active process, that it enters into many activities other than those ordinarily associated with the word "art," and that when fine art itself is in question we can most fully understand it by conceiving it as a type of doing rather than as something undergone. Our problem now is to analyze the actual process of creation, to see how what is given at the start of the artist's labors is transmuted into the achieved result.

Art in general, as we have said, is an expression of emotion, an expression which consists not, as with ordinary expressions in gestures, exclamations, or physically efficacious acts, but in an envisagement of the moving object in the terms or qualities that the emotion has seized upon and laid bare as significant. The object, so envisaged, is never identical with the object as it exists independently, either as a physical thing or as it is conventionally perceived. Rather, the aesthetic object is such a reorganization of conventional impressions, a reinterpretation of familiar fact, as will reveal their distinctive significance for feeling or emotion. It is this principle which out-laws both photographic and academic art, in both of which absence of individuality on the artists' part, of personal creative force, is obvious from a meaningless or stereotyped version of the thing seen. Expression of emotion by interpretation of what has moved us is always and everwhere the essence of the aesthetic experience, and the aesthetic experience is present wherever we find such interpretation, in the world of affairs and personal relations as well as in the world of "art" ordinarily so called.

Emotions are in the first instance aroused by objects which have a practical relation to our welfare, and art, if it is to offer a foot-hold for feeling, must in some degree possess an affinity with such objects. The version of natural things which art gives may be far removed from the original, for emotions contain the possibility of almost infinite transformation, and may travel far afield from the occasion of their first or "natural" appearance.

* Abridged and adapted from Dr. Buermeyer's new book, *The Aesthetic Experience*, the Barnes Foundation Press, Merion, Pa. Price, $1.50.

This is true in ordinary life, as well as in the passage from ordinary life to art. What we love, hate, despise, admire, does not remain the same as our sensibilities develop and become refined. Between disgust at a bad smell or at a swarm of vermin, and disgust at a contemptible act or vulgar jest, there is a wide gulf, though in important psychological respects the emotion is the same in both. By what bridge, we must ask, does feeling cross the gulf between objects so disparate in kind?

The answer is clear. Our feelings respond, or may be taught to respond, to objects *analogous* to those which originally excited them, and analogy is community of form. The community of form, the resemblance, may be slight, and then the analogy is said to be subtle, but some formal identity there must be if feeling is to be relevant at all. The passage of emotion to art, in other words, depends upon form: art as a whole is creative by virtue of its selection, transformation, and reorganization of the forms of nature; within art, the process of creation is one of reorganization of the forms employed by previous art, and their diversification and enrichment by forms freshly borrowed from nature.

The meaning of form is essentially the same, whether applied to natural objects or to the things of art. All things possess characteristic quality or individuality chiefly through their form. It is by virtue of this that they are recognized for what they are, and increasingly so as recognition becomes penetrating or assured. We may say that a chair or a table or a human face gives us a sensation, but this is a loose and colloquial manner of speaking. It is the arrangement, and not except incidentally the particular quality of the sensations, that confers individuality upon any perception. A face is just the face it is because of the disposition of the features, the size of the eyes and the distance between them, the proportions of the forehead. Even what seems a matter of simple sensation, for example, the complexion, is formal, in that it depends upon color-contrast and not upon mere color. What we have merely an "impression" of, we know vaguely, superficially, uncertainty. In other words: nothing really known or grasped is a mere blur of qualities: its qualities are organized into a pattern or network of relations, and this pattern constitutes its form.

It is obvious from the above that whenever experience presents us with recognizable objects, whenever it is intelligible, it presents us with such forms. In ordinary personal life, these forms are organizations of events, relations of changes in one object to changes in another. Every impulse or instinct picks out of the

chaos of our impressions such as are indicative of other impressions to be anticipated, sees in some of the things going on about us signs, warnings, or promises of things not yet seen, and correlates with them appropriate acts of coöperation or opposition on our part. To be angry is to observe a sign of obstruction to our will, to look for means of overcoming the obstruction, and to be prepared to take action accordingly. It is to see all these things in relation, so that they compose into a single plot or drama: indeed, most of the plots or dramas in literature are variations on a few simple formulas outlining the normal causes and courses of our more primitive instincts. This illustrates the characteristic passage of forms from life into art, and as art becomes great art, it increasingly makes such a selection of forms that human desire is freed, so far as possible, from the meaningless distraction, the obstructions without significance, that dog its steps in the real world.

Of course, the desires which art satisfies, even symbolically or impersonally, need not be those springing from such obvious and practically important instincts as fear, sex or pugnacity. They may be as central and pervasive as our fondness for rhythm or as incidental and trivial, in themselves, as our liking for a particular combination of colors. But of all the literally innumerable combinations of sensation which the artist can cause us to experience, only those have value which specifically appeal to something in our native constitution.

The creativeness of art, in summary, resides in its extraction, from the vast number of forms given in experience, of those which are peculiarly significant for emotion, and its reworking of these forms into what we may call a single coherent design. This design or form or vision is a grasp or understanding of the world, an illustration of what *is*, but it is creative in that the illumination is one which nature, unassisted by the artist, is powerless to provide.

These generalities may be illustrated by a brief sketch of some important episodes in the history of painting. Such a sketch will make it clear how in the evolution of forms, in which the creative aspect of art emerges, the artist is constantly drawing both on nature and on the traditions of art, the funded accomplishments of his predecessors. In the course of the development as personal expressiveness increases, truth increases also—a paradox if we think of art as a bare addition to experience or embellishment of nature, but a natural and inevitable consequence when we have understood the truth that art is a revela-

tion of nature, though to be sure a revelation possible only through the agency of conscious human beings.

At the very beginning of modern art, we find painting subordinated to the end of illustration, especially illustration of religious themes. It was, in the main, almost flat, and its figures and background were almost entirely conventional in form. Drawing was exclusively line-drawing, and though the objects were colored, they were constructed by means of line and shading. To the shapes so drawn, color was added as though by an afterthought.

Later the Florentine painters conceived their pictures in three dimensions, and the objects in them were made to seem as tangible as possible. With this achievement, a new set of resources were put at the painter's disposal. He was encouraged to look for more in the real world, since he was able to provide new relationships between the elements in his compositions, and to endow his world with more of the fulness of reality. His new and more pregnant form enabled him to unify a greater variety of material, and he was both more true to nature and more free to modify nature in the interests of his individual conception.

The Venetians lent to their pictures a much greater splendor by enriching their palette and adding to the formal arrangement in space the effects of color harmony. In addition, they used color as a constituent of objects with such effects that the objects appear more truly solid than in the Florentines. The freshness, depth and glow of swimming, harmonious, unifying color thus achieved, represented an enrichment of nature as it exists and a new instrument for lending it aesthetic significance. It represented a new form. In the Florentines generally, color and shape remained distinct and the effect of three-dimensional solidity which appears in the majority of their work is attained by the contrast of light and shadow rather than by color incorporated into the structure of objects. In many instances, that method of using light to the comparative exclusion of structural color, gives to the work of many of the Florentines, even Leonardo, the effect of deficiency of plastic means and leads to a somewhat stereotyped form which degenerated into an academic formula in some of the lesser men, Luini for example. With Rubens appeared a combination of the rich color of the Venetians with some of the technical devices of the Florentines for achieving the solidity of objects, and at the same time a heightened sense of movement and rhythm, a suggestion of forces acting in three dimensions, and of tumultuous activity. In his form, as in

Titian's, the sharp contrast between line and color disappeared; color itself became more an instrument of draughtsmanship and one of the principal means of rendering solidity and of unifying the picture. Here as elsewhere, each new form makes available a new set of natural resources, and enables the painter so to modify and reshape this material that the result not only more truly grasps but more greatly glorifies the real world.

In Velasquez, though color, space-organization and movement show no further advance, an additional motif, realism, makes its appearance. Rubens made all that he touched grandiose, tempestuous; his pictures seem almost like the cataclysms of nature. Velasquez painted in a much more restrained style. He advanced upon all his predecessors, however, in his unimpassioned yet penetrating eye for the secret of his subject, in his ability to find in it that which lent itself to plastic representation and at the same time had characteristic significance. His concern was thus partly for subject-matter, yet not at all for "literary" subject-matter. He gave to all that he reproduced its plastic equivalent, and so promoted a real synthesis between color and shape, on the one hand, and the theme which they embodied. This of course had in some degree been done before, but in Velasquez there is far less reliance upon chance associations such as the "nobility" of classic scenes, the religious feeling which springs from ecclesiastical subjects, the power that depends upon magnitude and indication of great objective forces.

In the Nineteenth Century there was a development of forms not unlike the development during the Renaissance. Starting with David and Ingres, we find a rather stilted conventionality of theme, a sharp division between line and color, with the color dull in David, brighter but still superficial in Ingres. With Delacroix comes a great access of richness in color accompanied by an almost equal gain in movement and force. These latter, however, depended in part upon comparatively adventitious means, upon the suggestions provided by romantic and melodramatic subjects; but his more vivid color is an integral part of the shapes he painted. Daumier scarcely used color at all, but he revealed the possibilities of organization, of solid reality, in tone, and recovered much of the formal power of Rembrandt.

Courbet introduced again the realism of Velasquez, added an earth-born force and pungency to his paintings, and so stripped away the conventionality of vision which kept Ingres and Delacroix at arm's length from their world. Manet carried realism to completion, achieved a degree of fidelity to his themes worthy

of Velasquez, and increased the repertoire which in Courbet had been restricted to comparatively few aspects. Degas employed Ingres's line to express movement, and so aided in restoring to plastic art that type of organization. The Impressionists were in the main satisfied to use the forms already current in their time, except that by studying minutely the variations in color under varying illumination, they added new richness to the harmonies and contrasts which color presents, and in that sense augmented painting's armory of forms. Cézanne achieved a solidity of objects by a new method of modelling in color and by the aid of intentional distortions.

In Renoir the achievements of nineteenth century painting reached their consummation. In him, color and line and solidity fuse. Shapes are not drawn and modelled and then colored: color, combined with light, is the material out of which they are made up, and the color itself is of greater richness, variety, and brilliance than in any of his predecessors. Not only is color used for drawing and the rendering of solidity, but the color-relations themselves are a formal and unifying element in a high degree. His composition unites balance, rhythm, and movement, and the whole conveys perfectly the spirit of what is portrayed. In him, in a word, the forms of his predecessors are united.

However, the development of new forms is not the same as progress towards an absolute goal. No doubt new values are revealed as painting goes on its way, but there is loss as well as gain. This is true of progress of all sorts. In life in general we have paid for our increased command over nature, our more humane disposition towards our fellows, and our more complete self-consciousness, by a loss of the simplicity and directness that cannot survive in a time of many and variously conflicting aims. Just how we have lost, we may see by comparing George Meredith with Homer. So in painting, as new effects become possible, old effects, not necessarily less valuable, become impossible. The naturalness of Manet may seem a great advance over the artificiality of David; but when we compare Manet with Titian or Tintoretto we are less certain that his style is the better. The stateliness, the magnificence, of the Renaissance portraits is something which our age cannot match, much as it may have surpassed the Renaissance in other respects. Progress, to repeat, is partial, and is always accompanied by retrogression. It is therefore futile to ask whether in any absolute sense Renoir and Cézanne represent an advance upon Giorgione and Rubens.

If we turn to literature we find the same gradual disentanglement of what is characteristic or essential in experience from the adventitious or irrevelant material in which, for primitive apprehension, it is set.

The form of a drama may be regarded as the working-out of a situation, the episode or series of episodes which follow from the interaction of a set of characters who are brought together under particular conditions. It is the revelation of what such a situation does to such characters, and the situation and characters are chosen with reference to a single effect. In "Othello," for example, we have the state of affairs created by a misalliance, a marriage between two persons of antecedents so diverse that any understanding between them is precarious, and the condition is complicated, and given tragic import, by the presence of a third person who wishes and is able to foment discord. Iago is able to persuade Othello that Desdemona is false to him; Othello thereupon kills Desdemona, and on finding that he has been misled and that Desdemona is innocent, kills himself. Upon Othello's suicide, that is to say his pronouncement and execution of judgment upon himself, hangs the moving and tragic effect of the whole play, since it vindicates his essential nobility, his power of acting as judge in his own case no less justly than in his wife's. If he were a lesser man, his ruin might be pathetic but it would not be tragic. Just that issue, in other words, is essential to a form in which the tragic emotion can be adequately embodied.

It is impossible, however, to avoid asking the question whether the same situation and its issue would have the same emotional force today. We may observe that its force depends essentially upon acceptance by the reader or spectator of a set of conventions about jealously, "honor," and retributive justice. But if we no longer regard retributive justice as divinely ordained, if it has come to appear as a barbarous, or at least a mediaeval superstition, Othello appears at the end pathetic, doubtless, as the victim of an illusion, but fundamentally stupid, and so not fully tragic. The form of the play, that is to say, no longer seems adequate to Shakespeare's purpose: it has ceased to be of universal human significance, and become essentially a document in Elizabethan conventionality.

The same sort of decay in a literary form or motif is seen in Mr. D. H. Lawrence's "Sons and Lovers." It was once the fashion to make marriage the climax of love stories, and to represent the difficulties to be surmounted as residing in external cir-

cumstances, such as parental objections, the machinations of rivals, or any of the familiar causes of slips between cup and lip. But modern writers, with a more adequate sense of what is likely to come between individuals, reverse the order of events. Marriage is not necessarily or even usually the consummation of this particular relationship: it may be merely the prelude to it; and the really significant events may come after the ground is clear and the persons thus set free from irrelevant hindrances begin to discover whether or not they can enjoy a richer experience together than either could find in isolation. In this instance, as in the preceding, a form has been shown by experience to lack true expressiveness, to be inadequate to the content that is to go into it.

These examples indicate that the value or finality of a form cannot be judged by any formula which can be abstractly stated and applied infallibly. Its expressiveness must be judged by the reaction of an individual as a complete personality, by its appeal to feeling. This reaction, this feeling, are the outgrowth of a multitude of habits, convictions, and preferences, of which many, and those not the least important, cannot be brought into consciousness by their possessor. Absolute finality, in a word, is impossible in aesthetic judgment or appreciation. But absolute finality has already taken flight from science, it seems to be abandoning morals and its persistence in dogmatic religion is a fact which lends itself to various interpretations. If no creation in art is final, we may find solace in the thought that future artists will not be reduced to a traffic in conventionalities.

The Journal of the Barnes Foundation will be published at irregular intervals and will be sent to institutions and individuals interested in art and education.

An Experience in Studying Paintings.

By Mary Mullen.

During the past season one of the classes at the Barnes Foundation made an intensive study of modern pictures with the object of tracing the development, by the moderns, of the traditions of painting as represented by the early Florentines and Venetians. It is quite evident that the means which the painters of all ages may legitimately employ—that is, color, line, space—are exactly the same, so that it is reasonable to assert that modern art instead of being a radical departure from the art of the Renaissance, is an evolution of that art, and that in order to understand and appreciate the paintings of this as of any other age it is necessary to trace step by step the fundamental traditions. This is the thesis set forth in one of our publications, *The Art in Painting*. In order to test its validity, the class above mentioned went abroad this summer to observe in the old masters the traditions which have been utilized by later painters to express themselves. It is futile to talk about paintings without at the same time looking at them; photographs and lantern slides are totally inadequate substitutes, and their only value lies in helping one to recall the originals to memory. It is the relations of color, line and space that constitute plastic form, and those relations are incapable of being reproduced.

With *The Art in Painting* as a textbook, the pictures in the principal galleries of Italy, France, Spain and England were studied to determine how the early painters used their means and what they accomplished. In the light of the text, and especially of the analyses of particular pictures, it became apparent that painting has developed just as other arts and sciences develop; that is, from the accumulated traditions of the different ages, the real artist has always borrowed what is useful for his purpose and modified it to express his own personality. Study of the old paintings showed that no tradition persists unchanged beyond its own age, and that no sound tradition ever entirely disappears. Thus Renoir and Cézanne reveal a close kinship to Titian and Michel Angelo, while Matisse and Picasso used the contributions of Oriental art, of El Greco and of others, to attain to new ends.

That good modern paintings are individual variations of the old means was brought home to the class very vividly one day in the Louvre, when, before a Chardin, analyses of early Florentine, Venetian and Dutch pictures were read, only to reveal that the early painters' method of using color, line and space could be pointed out, in modified and personally creative forms, in the Chardin. This method of tracing the characteristics of the earlier painters in later men, and seeing how the later men modified them in an individual, personal way, is now used in the class as part of the regular plan in plastic research. It has been found to be of great service in familiarizing the students with the traditions; but, best of all, it is seen to supply the criterion that determines the creative ability of artists. Unless we know what the artist was trying to do, what means were at his command and how he has used them to accomplish his ends, we cannot know whether he achieved a characteristic expression or whether his work was merely a repetition of traditional formulas and, therefore, lacking in creative ability. A more detailed account of the method of study as practised will indicate its value.

The Fifteenth Century Italian painter, Piero della Francesco, achieved his individual plastic design by personal modification of line, color and space as these are found in Giotto. In neither artist is the portrayal of narrative—chiefly religious themes—to be regarded as anything but the setting for the plastic design which makes their paintings significant as works of art. In the case of Piero the cool detachment, which is one of his characteristics, leaves no doubt that the story was of secondary consideration to the plastic design. The chief distinction between ancient and modern painting is that the moderns are interested much more in pure design and that subject-matter is relatively unimportant. While even Piero distorted all his plastic means to some extent in the interest of design, the later men distort so much that in some cases there is no faithful reproduction of the naturalistic appearance of objects as, for instance, in Cézanne, Matisse, Picasso, Pascin, etc.

Piero's subtle use of color is undoubtedly one of his principal plastic means. In general, it is a cool, pervasive blue, so varied with light and related to other colors as to give an effect capable of arousing profound aesthetic feelings. In the work of the contemporary painter, Picasso, in his so-called "blue period," we find a quite similar use of a pervasive, subtly varied blue. As in Piero, the blue accomplishes similar effects: it moves through the entire picture, and even when combined with other

colors it dominates them and gives the painting its characteristic form. The combination of a rich old ivory with the blue is common to both men. A simplicity similar to Piero's is also noted when, in Picasso, the color itself is felt as a mass or gives the effect of space as it recedes into the background, and is the one particular element that unites the composition into an organic whole. The quality of the color, though less cool and less dry than Piero's, contributes its share to the general feeling of detachment and dignity which is a part of Picasso's own individual expression.

Two other similarities in method of using the plastic means are very striking and recall inevitably the kinship between the two artists: Picasso's drawing produces the same rigidity in the arms, legs and heads which contributes so much to Piero's design. Picasso's modelling, to achieve the effect of third dimension in figures, is accomplished by the same subtle use of light and color which yields that one-piece-like effect to the various parts of the body, especially the face, which is so characteristic of Piero.

However, to an observer who is familiar only with the old masters, Picasso's form would remain unknown even after his debt to Piero had been recognized. Almost five centuries separate the ages of the two painters, and during that period the high Renaissance and the great subsequent painters had contributed much to the traditions. The plastic means—color, line, space—had each been put to new purposes by Titian, Tintoretto, El Greco, Velasquez, Rubens, Daumier, Cézanne, Renoir, Manet, Degas and others; the results were new and monumental effects that had become thoroughly integrated into the traditions of painting when Picasso appeared on the scene. In the work of Picasso can be detected traces of the traditions of every age subsequent to Piero, together with the fact that Picasso so modified and integrated the influences that a personal, individual creation emerges.

What has been said concerning Piero's influence upon Picasso can be stated also of the Piero tradition upon painters of such widely divergent types of expressions as Puvis de Chavannes, Cézanne, Renoir and Prendergast; the perception of these influences is an everyday occurrence with the members of our classes who have studied the original paintings. The point, however, is not to emphasize Piero's greatness, but to indicate that part of what made the work of the old masters significant is the fact that the presence of traditions which they established

can be demonstrated in the work of all the important painters since the Renaissance. Further reference to particular painters will illustrate the general principle with more precision.

Uccello, a Florentine painter of the Fourteenth Century, is now universally esteemed as one of the most important of the old masters, although during his life his work was as strongly condemned by the academicians as was the work of the impressionists fifty years ago. The cause of the condemnation was that Uccello made a radical departure from current traditions by so subordinating subject-matter to plastic design that the narrative appeared grotesque. In fact, the grotesqueness of the scene, viewed from the naturalistic standpoint, was inevitable to the dramatic use of the plastic means which is the outstanding quality of Uccello's form. For instance, in his battle scenes the straight lines of spears and swords, the curved lines of men and animals, are brought into such relations with one another that the figures and the spaces which they occupy make designs that as creations are infinitely more moving aesthetically than any story represented realistically. In his work appeared for the first time the sacrifice of plausible and realistic narrative to the achievement of abstract design. All the means were deliberately distorted—line, color and, particularly, space—to such an extent that it was not until comparatively recent times that Uccello's work began to be appreciated for the tremendously moving power of his plastic form. Students of painting now see in Uccello the origin of much of what makes the work of subsequent painters, like Raphael and El Greco, significant. That is, a painting is a work of art only when its aesthetic appeal is generated by the creative use of line, space and color to realize a form which has its own identity independent of narrative and sentimental values. When this axiom is recognized we see that the single element in Raphael which entitles him to high rank as an artist in his ability so to place objects that the spatial intervals between them are aesthetically moving. We see that Uccello not only exceeded Raphael in the novel use of space to create a design that is powerful aesthetically, but that he was able to so relate line, space and color that his total plastic form is greater: it results from the integration of all the plastic means in an organic unity.

After the class has observed these characteristics of Uccello's work—that is, had learned to abstract plastic from narrative values—the first indispensable step had been taken toward the recognition of the significant features of all those painters since

El Greco, who had subordinated representation to plastic design, which necessitated distortion of naturalistic appearances. It was a delightful adventure to see how El Greco emphasized line, light and color to achieve ends similar to those that Uccello accomplished by emphasizing and distorting perspective; how the modern Rousseau *le douanier* unified Uccello's method of using space with other elements of the Florentine and subsequent traditions and attained to a new form of infinite charm and naiveté; how the contemporary Chirico so builds upon the Uccello-like utilization of space that something new and moving aesthetically is added to the tradition. We saw in the best work of Matisse, Picasso, Soutine, Pascin and other contemporaries a design which can be compared point by point with similar use of the plastic means in Uccello.

It was with considerable misgivings that we approached the application of the method to the study of the important Botticellis in the Uffizi, because the obvious and universal appeal that has made those paintings popular is assailed in *The Art in Painting* as based upon sentimental rather than strong plastic values. The reasons for questioning the importance of Botticelli had been stated repeatedly during the past season in our talks in front of the paintings in the gallery of the Foundation, at which time the relative importance of decorative and structural forms had been discussed. We began the study of Botticelli's famous "Spring" by an analysis of the artist's use of line, space and color individually, and then raised the question to what extent they had been integrated into an organic unity. We were all deeply impressed with the graceful charm of the painting "Spring," and we endeavored to see by what plastic means that effect was produced. We found a marvellously fluid and graceful line winding in and around all the objects and making a succession of patterns which add to the charm of the line. It builds a series of arabesques that are rhythmic in the highest degree; but the line has no structural value, such as it has in the Venetians, and has little of the organic or functional power, as it has in Giotto or Piero; the color is dull and somewhat garish, offers only the superficial pleasingness of feeble color combinations and is not so related to line and space that new forms emerge. His line is not expressive in the sense that plastic expression is the balanced and integrated use of all the plastic means. The result is that Botticelli's line, whether in revealing movement or psychological states, is more akin to imitation than to creation. His line, unsupported by inte-

gration with the other plastic means, amounts to an accentuation of a detail which stands out in isolation instead of being merged with the other plastic elements into a design which functions as a whole. In other words, the facile, extraordinary, almost flamboyant decorative forms are accompanied by so little structural plastic substance that we look upon Botticelli's paintings as primarily high-grade decorations which cannot be considered seriously as works of the greatest art. The difference between expression, or expressive form, and decoration is that in expression the use of form and matter is subsidiary to rendering the essential quality of what is presented as the artist sees it, while in decoration the painter need consider nothing but the relation of color, line, space, mass to other color, line, space, mass. In all paintings expression and decoration are clearly separable upon analysis, but they fuse into an ensemble in aesthetic perception of the highest order.

What we observed in Botticelli proved valuable to our general plan by relating it to what we had studied in a modern painter, Renoir, whose work is also highly decorative. The elaborate arabesques and linear rhythms of Botticelli create an appeal which is comparatively lacking in Renoir; but when we consider integration of all the plastic means into a total form as the touchstone of aesthetic value we see that Renoir is the greater artist. His decorative surfaces are made up of a fusion of line, light and color which are integral parts of his structural forms. As a result, decoration and expression combine into a series of plastic units which, in turn, merge one with the other into a rich total design, a harmonious interweaving of all the plastic means. This comparison again illustrates the kinship between old and modern painting in that the decorative forms which make the charm of Botticelli's work reappear, but with increased power, in those contributions of the great subsequent painters—Venetian, Rubens, the Eighteenth Century Frenchmen—upon which Renoir built his individual plastic form.

Our study of Michel Angelo was particularly illuminating because we applied the method to one of the old masters themselves, and had ocular demonstration that even the greatest of them attained to their individual expression by utilizing the contributions of their predecessors. Michel Angelo, perhaps more than any other painter, conveys the feeling of abstract power and strength. His design, as revealed in the frescoes in the Sistine Chapel, consists chiefly of a rather incisive line related to color, light and space through the medium of a series of internal

smaller designs represented by muscular accentuations. Each of the plastic means is itself indicative of strength and power, and there are no weak spots in the process of organizing those individual effects into a unified whole. However, in spite of the individuality of the total effect, the debt he owes to previous artists is clearly perceptible in the case of each of the plastic means. His incisive line, his use of light and shadow in modelling, the peculiarly strong and sensuous quality of his color, the quite particular effects yielded by muscular accentuations—all these may be seen clearly in work prior to his: Greek sculpture, the paintings of Giotto, Verrocchio, Pollaiuolo, Signorelli, Cosima Tura, Leonardo, etc. What Michel Angelo did was to make the traditions of his predecessors the foundation for new and distinctly personal effects, just as later men, Tintoretto, El Greco, Rubens, Poussin and many others make the Michel Angelo tradition a point of departure for their own individual contributions.

Our interest in Michel Angelo became a very personal one when we saw in the Delacroix, Daumiers, Cézannes and Matisses in our collection similar effects attained with precisely the same means that enter into the Michel Angelo tradition. But here, as was the case with Michel Angelo's own use of his predecessors' contributions, numerous other traditions were made use of by Delacroix, Daumier, Cézanne and Matisse in creating their own forms. For example, in our Delacroix there is the same use of accentuations to convey the feeling of muscular power, but the Venetian use of color and a modification of the Rubens swirl of light, line and color, make a new tradition, Delacroix's own, which has been adopted by many subsequent painters. Daumier, too, used muscular accentuation, but added to it still another phase of the Venetian color tradition, as well as an adaptation of the chief technical device of Rembrandt—chiaroscuro; these in turn were endowed with a new significance by Daumier's original method of making a heavy line of color serve the triple purpose of making distortions, defining contours and entering into relations with adjacent areas to make new color forms. The total effect is a monumental solidity and power scarcely less moving than the same effects in the best work of Michel Angelo. Cézanne took over whole forms of Michel Angelo—including quality of color and muscular accentuations, added to them El Greco's distortions, Daumier's heavy line of color, Manet's method of applying paint, and his own modification of the impressionist's technique of color juxtapositions, plus the modelling by modulation of color-spots originated by himself. The com-

posite effect is comparable in power to Michel Angelo's, but more austere and set in a design which exerts an added appeal by reason of the departures from naturalism. Matisse shows no direct derivation from Michel Angelo, but the contributions of Delacroix, Daumier and Cézanne, above mentioned, have each been separated from the ensemble which makes the work of those later artists resemble Michel Angelo's, and are used by Matisse to realize the structural forms attained by the use of color which characterize Matisse's individual contribution to the traditions of painting. This kinship between Delacroix, Cézanne and Matisse is easily seen in comparing works of those artists in our collection, where line, color, light and space are used in the same manner in certain parts of the figures.

The instances cited are sufficient to illustrate the principles of an objective method of studying paintings that is based upon observation, experience and reflection. It replaces the prevalent error of reading stories into pictures, as well as the practice of academicians of applying a set of technical dogmas which substitute mechanical rule for intelligent judgment. In short, our method instructs the observer how to look for plastic or "significant" form and supplies the criteria by which it is to be judged when found.

Our experience in studying both ancient and modern pictures according to the method outlined proved that students with sufficient background will, after a short training, form the habit of ignoring narrative, sentiment and other irrelevant matters, and occupy themselves with the only attributes which make a painting significant, that is, plastic design. Art becomes then not a matter of old paintings or modern paintings, but of good art and bad art. We saw in Giotto indubitable evidence that he sacrificed literal reproduction by distorting the plastic means whenever it was necessary to achieve a more moving plastic design. We saw that same practice at work in the paintings of every great artist, from the Renaissance to our age, and we realized that these departures from literal reproduction were the cause of the aesthetic appeal exerted by the plastic design. In other words, they express a human interest of essential value in terms truly plastic, and such expressiveness is inevitably an enhancement and not a distraction. These distortions of line in Giotto, of light in Leonardo, of space in Uccello, will escape no attentive observer, nor will the fact that these practices became a part of the traditions which every subsequent important artist employed or modified to his own ends. The chief difference

between the old and the new paintings is that the moderns, beginning with Courbet, Manet and the men of 1870, liberated themselves more completely from the restrictions imposed by subject-matter and exhibit greater interest in relatively pure design. When we compare the plastic design of the great painters of the Renaissance with the design in the great moderns and contemporaries like Courbet, Manet, Renoir, Cézanne, Matisse, Picasso, we see the similarity in every essential constituent. From Giotto through the Renaissance to the great painters of our own age, we see the threads of the traditions which gave the old paintings their value as works of art, continue, added to, modified, often made more significant. The determinants have been the general spirit of the time and the states of culture in all the intervening ages—ages which, of course, have been alternately rich and arid. In fact, an infallible indication of this richness or aridity is the quality of the painting of the age in question. The decadence subsequent to the Renaissance was followed by the flowering of El Greco, of Valasquez, of Rubens, later of the Eighteenth Century French, of Constable, Delacroix, Manet, Renoir, Cézanne and, in our age, of Matisse, Picasso, Soutine, Modigliani and others. It is a fascinating study to trace those traditions merely as an intellectual game; but even richer are the rewards when we see the play of personality, of soul and of character that real artists put into their own modifications and adaptations of the contributions of their great predecessors. It makes us independent of such incidents as current religion, superstition, materialism or what not, which fix the spirit of any particular age. Great artists always rise superior to such incidents and express universal values in line, color, space, integrated into plastic design. We share their Olympian superiority when we learn to read that plastic design intelligently.

Franz Cizek and the Free Expression Method.

By Thomas Munro.

It was largely with the aim of seeing Professor Cizek's class in operation that the writer went this summer to the Vienna School of Arts and Crafts. The experiment being tried there in

children's art education was something to be enthusiastic about, for the American schools observed had shown almost everywhere a glaring need for exactly what Professor Cizek stands for: more freedom for the child to look at the world and to experiment in congenial ways of expressing himself in some artistic medium.

The school is used to receiving foreign visitors, and is courteous and clear in explaining its ideas. Cizek himself is a man to command respect: assured, quiet and intent in manner, he strikes one as an intelligent enthusiast, quite confident that the road he has mapped out is the best one. He is a teacher, not a politician, and has lately been forced by intolerant superiors to abandon a modernist class of older students in favor of conventional craft training. The outside world has honored him more than his own country.

The small work-room, crowded with some fifty boys and girls from seven or eight to fifteen, was a delight to watch. What could more completely justify a method of instruction, one thought, than the fact that it obviously gave children such a good time in the process? No one who has ever been present at an old style school art lesson, and seen or suffered himself in the cramped, painful and smudgy task of copying, could have failed to enjoy the spectacle of animated industry. The same result, by the way, may be credited without reserve to several American schools that follow similar methods: for example, the Horace Mann and Walden Schools in New York City.

In the Vienna school it was a continued delight to look at some of the products: here was a carved wood frieze of boys playing football, in crisp, irregular rhythm; there a crowded street-scene, composed unconventionally but firmly in broad areas of pure color; farther on a group of fantastic birds against brilliant foliage. But gradually, with other pictures, came a sense of recognizing something familiar, and with it a few vague doubts. One picture after another was almost identical with those that had been printed in colors and exhibited in America: groups of children playing and dancing with flying hair and ribbons, in poster-like blocks of color against flowery fields or elaborately decorated backgrounds. Then came reminiscences of Austrian handicraft, such as the familiar porcelain figure of a child with curly hair and flowers outlined in black; echoes of the romantic colored illustrations in *Jugend*, of Böcklin and Thoma, of newer expressionist grotesqueries that had become a current formula in German exhibitions. Even the striking obviousness of street posters blurted out here and there.

Was this the spontaneous personal expression of the students? A word with Professor Cizek and his assistant revealed their devout confidence that the work was absolutely uninfluenced. And there was no reason to doubt their entire sincerity. They moved quietly from bench to bench, looking on, giving no directions or authoritative judgments, now and then proposing a problem or dropping some half-humorous, encouraging remark.

The children had been given no opportunity to see outside works of art, it was asserted in reply to a question: reproductions of old or modern masters were never shown them. They were actually discouraged from visiting the Vienna museums, rich in works of almost every school, for these were expressions of other ages. The class of older students had sometimes been advised to see modernist exhibitions, of expressionism, cubism and futurism, so that they might learn to express the spirit of the present age—machinery, motion, construction and power. Professor Cizek himself had originated a form of art in this spirit, which he called "constructivism" or "dynamic rhythm." His advanced class (now abandoned) had, it seemed, been taught not entirely by the free expression method, but with some definite pressure toward these modern forms. The products of this group were abstract and wholly different from the children's, but showed a marked resemblance to each other.

In short, it was obvious that in spite of the attempt at preserving spontaneity, several different types of influence had affected the work of both groups. The teacher himself, first of all, was doing more than he realized; in no other way could the marked likeness between the pictures, which stamped them at once as Cizek products, be explained. Just how this force had been exerted during the year, one could only guess at. But every teacher knows how eagerly pupils look for someone to lean on, for some advice or praise, some hint as to what to do next, and how easily any word, act or facial expression on his part may reveal what he likes, or suggest some way of procedure. Try as he may to help children to be natural, he can only encourage his own conception of what children would naturally do.

It is another common experience of teachers that pupils imitate each other, and that no amount of praise for self-reliance can stop them. Above all, pictures exhibited on the walls are imitated, especially when thought to represent the teacher's preference. When, as in the Cizek school, work by former as well as present students is accessible to view, a strong factor is at work toward the continuing of stereotyped forms.

Finally, the student is sure to see current art outside the school, and to hear art criticism of a kind: the pictures at home, the comments about his own and other work, the shop-windows full of prints and paintings, as well as the magazines and posters above referred to. These are not all bad. The Austrian child, for example, has an unusual opportunity to see brightly decorative peasant costumes, embroidery, painted and carved wooden boxes and furniture. Even advertising reflects and cleverly popularizes, much more directly than in America, new movements in art. Any active and curious child, especially one who is himself trying to draw and paint, is sure to look avidly at such things about him, and no teacher can prevent their influences.

In view of these conditions, the ideal of keeping a child's imagination in a state of absolute purity and freedom is from the start impossible. The very attempt at such an end is evidence of the false psychology which has affected much writing on art education: of the old belief that some "self" within the child is bursting for expression and release, and that all outside forces tend to repress and enslave it.

Yet the persistent attempt to shut out influence is sure to have some effect. For which types of art are easiest to keep away? Not the vulgar of the street, nor the childish type of the school-room, but the great traditions of the past and the best work of the present. Not readily accessible, less ostentatious than the visible clamor around, buried in frozen disorder in the museums, good works of art may never catch a child's attention or be understood, unless the teacher points them out, and invites him to see how they differ from things of a more obvious appeal. Failure to do this can have only one result: that the bad influences have practically no competition.

Their effect on the children is of course very gradual. A more detailed inspection of the Cizek class-room revealed a fact already observed in similar American schools: that in general the most original and appealing designs were those of the youngest pupils; the older the child the more his picture tended to be sentimental, conventional and weak in plastic form. A question to the teacher in charge revealed the further significant fact that the older students tend to drop out and abandon the class, which is held out of regular school hours. After its twenty years of existence no prominent artist could be named who had received his early training at the Cizek school.

What is the reason for this disheartening failure of precocious talents to develop, after a splendid start? The answer given at

the school was the force of economic pressure, the demands of college and vocational training. This is doubtless true in many cases, but is it enough to explain the situation? Would not a determined interest survive these obstacles, as many artists have in the past survived them? The problem recalled a remark heard last winter from an American boy of considerable talent in modelling, who had left it to spend his spare hours at mechanical engineering. The art classes had been fun, he remarked with a superior air, but were just "fooling around;" he wanted to "learn something" and "get somewhere." A few years of undirected toying with art materials had been enough to exhaust its attractiveness as a game, and he had come to demand something more substantial to bite down on mentally, some intellectual food for his growing curiosity about the world. For this next step in development the free expression method had no help to offer him: nothing but the vague advice to keep on being himself, and doing whatever he wanted.

The old academic method also tends to be restrictive, but not, as the free expressionists suppose, because it imparts traditions, but because it imparts too few traditions, and too little of each, so that the only ones to be followed (usually the Greek, Florentine and Dutch) seem to have absolute authority. Indeed, the restrictions of the Cizek method and the old academic method spring from the same source. The Cizek plan, far from achieving its end of freedom, robs and restricts the student when it shuts out all but a few influences, and these few none of the best. Both methods fail to aid as they might the growth of real creativeness, because they fail to present a sufficient variety of artistic forms and techniques. A broad study of traditions, it has been explained in two previous articles in this series,* is thoroughly compatible with individual experiment, and in fact makes original choice and reorganization almost unavoidable. At the same time, unlike the free expression method, it provides the student with the artistic heritage of the past, without which his interest in art materials cannot long be sustained, nor his use of them become mature and rational.

* *A Constructive Program for Teaching Art* and *College Art Instruction: its Failure and a Remedy*, in the April and May numbers of this Journal.

Art Teaching that Obstructs Education.

By Albert C. Barnes.

DYNAMIC SYMMETRY.

The theory of "dynamic symmetry" as the fundamental principle of plastic design, and the method of painting based upon it, do not merit serious consideration except for the light they throw upon current opinion and practice in the realm of art and aesthetics. The method was originated by the late Jay Hambidge and is in use in many schools, including the New York School of Fine and Applied Art, with its thirteen hundred pupils and its many branches and connections throughout the country. It has also influenced the work of a variety of painters popularly regarded as artists and a considerable number of persons in authority in education are disposed to take it seriously. These facts confer upon the method considerable sociological importance.

Mr. Hambidge regarded himself as the rediscoverer of the secret of Greek aesthetic design and believed that he thus anticipated another Renaissance. He intimates that in "dynamic symmetry" science and art are auspiciously wedded at last, and the means of transmuting base metal into gold is delivered to men. What his theory lacks in originality is compensated for in simplicity and naiveté. He writes: "Lines, angles and curves are regarded merely as defining areas which compose the units of a map-like arrangement within the boundaries of the picture-frame or the canvas stretcher." In other words, his plan consists in reducing the composition to a flat pattern in which the chief masses are outlined and placed with reference to each other by means of a series of rectangles. For the construction of these rectangles an extensive set of mathematical formulas is provided. That is the method—that, and nothing more. In short, Phidias, Praxiteles, Giorgione, Rembrandt, Cézanne and Matisse had a box of tricks which any person familiar with the use of cube roots can apply and produce great works of art.

The arguments offered in its behalf are, first, that much of the art of the Greeks lends itself to analysis in terms of the ratios given; second, that the method facilitates the enlargement of sketches, which is required when they are transferred to the

final canvas; third, that it has proved useful to painters who have won prizes at exhibitions. The reduction of all pictorial design to flat pattern is defended on the ground that the use of deep space is a descent of art into photography!

To state arguments such as these is to make debate superfluous. Yet his claim to "logic," to liberation of creative energy, to avoidance of anything like a "studio-trick to cover up poverty of thought," is made so consistently and so confidently that the unwary may be taken in, and it is therefore worth while to indicate how grotesque the claim is. The initial reduction of what in a painting makes it aesthetically significant—that is, pictorial design—to flat pattern, to mere placing of line and area, disqualifies at the start everything that follows. The isolation of the elements in plastic form from one another and from the form as a whole is the aesthetic sin from which spring nearly all the aesthetic vices. There is no integrity in art unless all the means at the painter's disposal are conceived as subsidiary to the effect intended. If the flat pattern of a picture is treated as something which can be fixed independently of, *e. g.*, the color, the result is as disastrous as that of separating plot and characters in literature or harmony and melody in music. Unless composition, drawing, color and light are felt from the start as aspects of a single plastic form, they are inevitably and necessarily just such "studio-tricks" as Mr. Hambidge professed to repudiate.

The preliminary assumption that the design of a picture is to be regarded as a flat pattern* is made by Mr. Hambidge dogmatically, although there is a show of argument in its behalf. Giotto and the painters of Greek vases are adduced as examples of the artists who avoided perspective because of its "photographic quality," in total disregard of the fact that the painting of vases is really a form of illustrative decoration and is not representative of plastic art at its best, and that Giotto's use of perspective in an original manner was one of the principal means of obtaining striking and individual aesthetic effects. Although Giotto did not portray realistic perspective as we know it, the effect of three dimensional space is subtly indicated by such means as color. However, since this and other plastic functions of color escape Mr. Hambidge's formula, he forcibly excludes whatever makes the method inapplicable, and his argument here is obviously perfunctory.

* Of course a flat pattern may have its own aesthetic value; but to make this value fundamental in plastic art is to reduce all painting to the status of wallpaper or rugs.

If it is logical to make a dogmatic assumption violently in conflict with the first principles of the subject under discussion, then Mr. Hambidge's claim to be logical is justified. His claim is frankly based on the impressive array of mathematical formulas by which the rectangular patterns making up the groundwork of a picture are to be constructed. But to confuse logic with the simple and, in this connection, irrelevant use of mathematics is, at the present day, simply naive, however awe-inspiring it may be to the uninitiate. When it is said of an artist that he "prefers to think out the arrangement of his pictures," what is meant, of course, is that such a person prefers calculation to sensibility or imagination. And, since calculation is easy and imagination hard, any such proposal to make the production of art possible to people who can learn formulas, but who lack great endowment, is sure to meet with general acclaim.

It is amusing to observe how the clichés of modern aesthetics may be appropriated, in perfect unconsciousness, by those who have not the faintest conception of their meaning. Mr. Hambidge, forgetting that he had just joined in the familiar reprobation of the ideal of copying, justifies his mathematical method by its success in analyzing and reproducing the forms found in nature! Just so, after deploring the subject picture, he congratulates himself because his method had proved useful to George Bellows and Robert Henri, whose popularity and ability to command the high prices which he finds impressive are due chiefly to the obvious and appealing subject-matter!

It is by the fruits of "dynamic symmetry" that we may know it. Miss Herter, in making use of it, "felt no embarrassment at any stage of the painting." Which of us does feel any embarrassment in repeating the multiplication-table? But the climax of absurdity comes in the fact that the method has been useful to George Bellows and Robert Henri, painters of pictures which reveal in every lineament a complete dearth of personal vision, of imaginative originality, whose chief stock-in-trade consists in the use of other men's ideas and methods. It is not surprising that the method should be commended by such men, or by the critic of the New York *Times*, in a review quoted by Mr. Hambidge, in which every sentence throbs with pleasure at the sight of little children obeying authority and never making any choices of their own except between Tweedledum and Tweedledee. "The mischievous notion of 'art for art's sake' is disposed of by this clear, precise method." Surely this sentence would more precisely express the critic's meaning if the phrase "for art's

sake" were dropped out of it, for art in any form is abhorrent to newspaper critics.

In brief, it is quite obvious that Mr. Hambidge was a man who had no real aesthetic sensitiveness, and no idea what an understanding of art could possibly mean. In the art of the past he missed all that is virile and distinctive—all which is not consecrated by authority and easily included in his formula. Even in the field from which he says his theory is drawn—that of Greek sculpture—he misses the significance of the great archaic period. His aesthetic theory, as his quotations from Denman Ross show, was a set of platitudes, some of them true, some false, but none of them really grasped. His ideal was the cooked-up picture, in which threadbare devices are feebly reshuffled for the delectation of the half-educated. It is represented by such a painter as Leon Kroll, whose "youth and freshness" are entirely a matter of pretty subject-matter, and whose work is plastically trite and stale in the last degree, an imitation of the mannerisms of other men's art. For the production of such painting "dynamic symmetry" represents a useful tool, a means of reducing still farther anything like individual perception. It is like an adding-machine, serviceable when mechanical problems are in question, without significance for genuine thought or creation, and when used as a substitute for them actually pernicious. It is a method to construct a skeleton and leaves entirely out of account the content that makes a work of art a living expression of an individual mind and soul.

The secret of Mr. Hambidge's mind and personality is revealed in the pleasure he took in the prices paid for pictures constructed in accordance with his method. Success of this sort means success in giving the public what it wants, in conforming to the standards generally accepted. These standards, which find the boundary of their authority at the point where art begins, Mr. Hambidge never seriously questioned. Essentially he was a Rotarian instructing Rotarians. He desired to think and feel like the crowd, only more conspicuously so, in order to be the crowd's leader. To those who have discovered the husk of art but not its kernel, he offered a recipe for making chaff look like wheat. His method corresponds to the devices for memory-training, for strengthening the will, for cultivating personality, which we see advertised in the magazines. The complimentary letters published in his book on *Dynamic Symmetry in Composition* are chiefly suggestive of testimonials to patent medicines: if we refrain from characterizing them as bad taste, it is only because

Mr. Hambidge was too naive to be judged by other standards than those which we apply to children. For the same reason it would be ungracious to call his system charlatanry—his first imposition was upon himself. There is nothing in his system that deals with the grasp of essentials in a subject and their presentation in that individual form which is characteristic of all true expression, of all that is entitled to be considered as art. By a flagrant abuse of the meaning of "logic" and a transfer of the values of mathematics to a field where they have no real significance, Mr. Hambidge built up an elaborate system of mechanics that enables people with no imagination and no aesthetic feeling to produce works of counterfeit art that win prizes and sell for high prices. The psychological principle at work is precisely the one of hypnosis:* and that is always possible when art and science are couched in high-sounding formulas and their prestige-value brought to bear upon people in whom sentimentalism, emotionalism and lack of individuality function as substitutes for individual experience and intelligent thinking. The system is, therefore, not a matter for the consideration of artists and aestheticians, but for the sociologist who deals with questions of economic waste occasioned by ignorance of the first principles of rational thinking and of personal and significant experience. The existence and vogue of such a system shows the imperative need for a more popular grasp of the rudiments of educational theory and practice which have been current in informed circles for more than twenty years.

THE PACH SYSTEM.

A contrasting phase of contemporary education in art is represented by the work of Walter Pach. Mr. Pach's writings on art and his lectures in museums, to women's clubs and to art associations throughout the country, are among the means by which art is presented to those who, like the characters in Mrs. Wharton's story, *Xingu*, "pursue culture in crowds, as though it were dangerous to meet alone." In the broader sense of the word, all such work belongs in the category of education: it is one of the forces by which public taste is moulded and standards in art are given currency in the public mind.

Ostensibly, Mr. Pach's purpose is to wage war upon academicism. His book, *The Masters of Modern Art*, is a survey of modern

* The slogan "dynamic symmetry" is the equivalent in art of the hypnotic word, "Mesopotamia."

painting in which the Nineteenth Century is briefly reviewed as the prelude or background to contemporary work. Such a treatment involves both the tracing of traditions and the evaluations of them as contributions to art and makes possible an estimate of Mr. Pach's historical sense as well as his aesthetic theory.

His abstract statements of theory consist chiefly in a repetition of what has been current in well-informed artistic circles for the past twenty years. For example, academicism is thus defined: "The periods of decadence are those in which man is too weak to perceive new aspects of the world, when he can only repeat expressions of the past." In addition, Mr. Pach pays verbal tribute to the continuity of all great art, to the need of a personal use of traditions and to the truism that the purpose of painting is to interpret reality both imaginatively and plastically. He states also the necessity of discussing pictures in plastic terms—color, line, light, space—although he makes no real attempt to go into finer points of plastic criticism based upon the objective, demonstrable use of the plastic means. In short, he marshals an array of platitudes that might lead the unwary to believe that Mr. Pach's aesthetics is sound and real and that his judgments of paintings are based upon personal experience.

The value of abstractions can be tested only by application; otherwise they correspond to the words the schoolboy repeats by rote after his teacher. Judged by this test, Mr. Pach turns out to be one who has caught the patter of modern aesthetic theory, but is almost helpless in the presence of an actual work of art. In his chapter, "From the Revolution to Renoir," he is safe as long as he repeats the platitudes that everyone has known for years, but the moment he ventures on an independent judgment he goes far astray. At the present day, it requires no discernment to say that Ingres and Degas were masters of line, that Delacroix was a great colorist from whom the impressionists derived a large part of their technique, or that Courbet and Manet were realists who did much to redeem painting from the artificiality prevalent before their day. Unfortunately, of current platitudes, Mr. Pach swallows those that are demonstrably wrong as well as those that are right. Delacroix did not "inaugurate" the whole of our modern understanding of color: his use of color was borrowed in many of its essentials from Constable, a contemporary of his and a much greater artist. When Mr. Pach says that Renoir's line shows an affinity

with that of Ingres, he is repeating a familiar misconception, based on a superficial understanding of Renoir's pictures of the period of 1885. And when he lauds Barye to the skies, as one of the chief sculptors of his century, the hopeless superficiality of his vision becomes apparent. Barye's work is a rendering in sculpture of the husk of Delacroix—of Delacroix's mannerisms without his art. Since academicism is just this confusion of tricks of style with essential art values, the true value of Mr. Pach's strictures on academicism becomes apparent. He might, indeed, be called an academician of the Left, a writer who admires the moderns as unintelligently as most college professors admire the painters of the Renaissance.

Further evidence of this is on nearly every page of Mr. Pach's book. Coming nearer to modernism, we find him extravagantly praising Seurat, largely for the mistaken attempt to derive an aesthetic color-formula from the science of optics. At the same time he neglects Seurat's real achievement, that of putting objects in a beautifully ordered space and composing them with color. And when we find Seurat's greatness vindicated by a comparison with that sentimental eclectic, Fra Angelico, it is apparent that Mr. Pach is equally at sea in all the periods of art.

It would be difficult to discover a more extraordinary ability to miss the point than is attested by Mr. Pach's chapter on the transition to modern painting, in which he discusses Cézanne and Redon. Mr. Pach repeatedly speaks as though design and distortion entered painting with Cézanne for the first time; he utterly ignores Cézanne's sources in impressionism and he never catches sight of his most important achievement, that of building form out of color. Instead of enlightening us about what Cézanne's pictures really offer, he takes refuge in a mystical jargon, designed to show Cézanne's preoccupation with "laws of the mind," though, of course, what these are is never explained. Cézanne, indeed, seems particularly to tempt writers to flights of dementia: they appear to think that because he is not a readily intelligible painter they can do him justice only by writing as unintelligibly as possible, on the principle current in the middle ages that a theory of the ridiculous must itself be a ridiculous theory.

Redon, whom Mr. Pach regards as one of the pivots on which modern art turns, is a painter of pallidly unreal canvases, lacking in any profound or vigorous plastic form, and in which attempted mysticism turns out to be rather superficial decoration. In that

respect he resembles the American painter, Arthur B. Davies, who is an utterly minor figure in modern art.

It is not possible to do more than mention briefly the cases in which Mr. Pach has overlooked the distinctive and important features in contemporary painting. He never discovers Rouault's obvious point of originality, his use of a broken line both to build and to decorate forms. He sees Matisse's obviously intensified color—who could fail to?—but the subtleties by which Matisse carried out his color-design, such as the use of line to reinforce color, go unmentioned. He swallows entire the meaningless cubistic claim to have "translated the chaos of the world of appearances" into "the order brought out of it by the mind." What the cubists actually did attain to was not a deeper grasp of realities, but a surface-decoration, interesting at its best, but never very moving. Since Mr. Pach cannot see this, he never understands what later painters, such as Pascin and Modigliani, got from the cubists in the way of spatial and linear patterns and rhythms. When he comes to speak of Rousseau, *le douanier* there is not a suggestion of Rousseau's plastic qualities; of his mastery of design (not literary design); of his peculiar combination of literalism and distortion; of his supreme command of space and his ability to organize it compactly and with intricate rhythms, yet with perfect clarity.

The crowning proof of Mr. Pach's ineptitude is his praise of Derain, the painter of best-sellers. He says: "Derain, of all our contemporaries the most exacting towards himself as regards the art of the Museum, goes to the world of men and women for inspiration, and tells of this world with intense yet serene enjoyment." This might with appropriateness be rewritten as follows: "Derain, of all our contemporaries the most adept in making merchandise out of the art of the museum, takes his wares to the world of men and women for profit, and so cheapens them that this world can enjoy them without effort."

In short, Mr. Pach's real achievements have been to give an elaborate pseudo-scientific dressing to platitudes, and to substitute for aesthetic perceptiveness and comprehension a mystical adoration of the great names of painting. His judgments on specific painters are not based on objective plastic facts, and the hollowness and vaporousness of his abstract principles are suffused with the emotion which he knows so well how to pour about them in order to make them impressive.

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Alleged appreciation of art, especially of plastic art, is usually preoccupation with qualities which are irrelevant and distracting. A painting, so far as it is a work of art, is not a literary document, an archaeological specimen, or a mere exercise in craftsmanship. It is an independent creation, the materials of which are color, line, mass and space, and appreciation is genuine only when it is directed to these plastic essentials. *The Art in Painting* is an explanation of these essentials, and of their organization in the complete work of art. The method employed in the book seeks to combine objectivity with due regard for the factor of personal and individual taste. It is offered in the hope that it may aid in the replacement of mere whim and idiosyncrasy by a rational enjoyment of demonstrable realities.

The book contains a general account of aesthetic principles, a specific statement of those principles in the field of plastic art, and an application of them to the more important schools and individuals in painting, past and present, as well as to a large number of particular paintings. The conclusions are, so far as possible, reinforced by illustrations, of which there are more than a hundred. From the discussion as a whole the conclusion emerges that the essential values of plastic art are the same in all periods of painting, that the qualities that made Giotto, Titian and Rembrandt great painters are to be found also in Renoir and in Cézanne, Picasso and Matisse. Indifference to either the great men of the past or their successors of today brands supposed aesthetic appreciation as illusion and self-deception.

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